



# TRAFFIC AND SAFETY MANUAL

## City Welcome Signs

### Description

City welcome signs identify communities and may provide a general welcome message, slogan, or claim to fame. The signs are divided into three categories;

1. Municipal Recognition (MR) signs erected from 1972 to 2008
2. Official City signs erected on private property
3. Signs authorized by the Department for placement within the Right-of-Way

### Municipal Recognition Signs

Until 2008, Iowa Administrative Code 761 IAC 117 required the permitting of city welcome signs through a program titled Municipal Recognition (MR) Signs. These signs had to be within two miles of the city limits and on private property. This program ceased in 2008, but some permits still exist due to slight differences in program requirements.

### Official City Signs

Federal and State regulations allow for the placement of official signs on private property as authorized by local authorities. Although no formal permitting is required, guidance from the Advertising Management Section is recommended. The following requirements apply;

1. The signs shall not be placed within the highway right-of-way (ROW).
2. The sign is erected by, or on behalf of, the local governmental entity within its territorial jurisdiction.
3. The appropriate officer within the local governmental entity has determined that the sign meets a public need or provides a public service and authorizes the placement on behalf of the governmental entity, and in furtherance of his/her official duties for the governmental entity.
4. The message does not contain any advertising or sponsors for businesses or private organizations, irrespective of their profit status.
5. The sign does not resemble any traffic control device provided for in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), nor interfere with the effectiveness of any such sign in the vicinity.
6. The sign is not placed in such a manner where it may contribute to a site obstruction near an intersection area.
7. Lights, if used, shall not be directed at the motorists nor be of such brilliance or intensity that the vision of the drivers can be temporarily impaired.
8. Changeable (LED) message centers may be used; Please confer with the Advertising Management Section for guidelines on acceptable messages.

## Signs Authorized by the Department

Although the placement of city welcome signs is generally reserved for locations outside of the ROW, there may be times when placement within the ROW can be considered. The following criteria should be applied when evaluating these requests:

1. The proposed area is not currently needed for highway purposes.
2. A feasible location outside of the ROW is not available.
3. The ROW is not for the interstate system.
4. The placement will be, at a minimum, outside the clear zone.
5. The placement will not cause any safety or operational issues, including view obstruction near intersections and placement in areas easily reachable by errant vehicles.
6. Business advertising, sponsors and private organizations, irrespective of profit status, are prohibited from being included in the message on the sign.
7. The design of the sign shall not attempt to direct or guide traffic, nor serve in the capacity of a traffic control device, or resemble such a device.
8. Authorization for the work shall be administered through a Work-in-ROW permit.
9. The Work-in-ROW permit shall contain provisions for indemnification for the State.
10. Maintenance access should be from the adjacent private property, unless physically impossible.
11. Proposals involving water or electricity shall be thoroughly examined.
12. The Department can withdraw the permission at any time for any reason, including proposed highway projects and safety concerns that have developed since approval.
13. All removal costs, even if such removal is at the State's request, shall be borne by the permittee/local agency. This shall be stipulated in the Work-in-ROW permit.

Requests shall be forwarded to the Assistant District Engineers for evaluation.

## Legal References

Iowa Code section 318.11

Iowa Code subsection 306C.11(4)

Iowa Administrative Code 761 IAC 117.1 (Definition) and 117.7

Code of Federal Regulations 23 CFR 750.151-153

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices Section 1A.08 paragraphs 06-08